Strategic management accounting: how far have we come in 25 years?

Kim Langfield-Smith (Monash University, Melbourne, Australia)
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Abstract
Purpose
The purpose of this paper is to provide a review of the origins of strategic management accounting and to assess the extent of adoption and “success” of strategic management accounting (SMA).

Design/methodology/approach
Empirical papers which have directly researched SMA and prior review papers of the adoption and implementation of SMA or SMA techniques are reviewed. As well as assessing the extent of adoption of SMA and the reasons underlying an apparent low adoption rate, the role of accountants in adopting and implementing SMA is considered. Finally, the success or otherwise of SMA is discussed.

Findings
SMA or SMA techniques have not been adopted widely, nor is the term SMA widely understood or used. However, aspects of SMA have had an impact, influencing the thinking and language of business, and the way in which we undertake various business processes. These issues cut across the wider domain of management, and are not just the province of management accountants.

Research limitations/implications
There is limited value in conducting future surveys of the adoption and implementation of SMA or SMA techniques. Rather, the focus should be on how SMA-inspired techniques and processes diffuse into general practice within organizations.

Originality/value
Twenty-five years after the term strategic management accounting was first introduced in the literature, this paper brings together disparate literature and provides a broad assessment of the “state-of-the-art” of strategic management accounting to inform researchers and practitioners.

Keywords
Strategic management | Accounting | Activity based costs | Budgetary control | Target costs

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